

# Spirit ualism ; What Does It Mean?

What Is It and What Are the Advantages  
to be Derived Therefrom?

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## DISCOURSE

Given Through

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A Lecture by Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond, Delivered at  
the Roseland Spiritualist Church on Easter Sunday,  
March 27, 1910.—Reported by Mr. Lamble.

Marion Skidmore Library  
Lily Dale, N. Y.

The Church of the Soul Holds Services in Hall 309, Masonic Temple,  
Every Sunday at 11 A. M.; Sunday School at 10 A. M.

# SPIRITUALISM---WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

## What Is It and What Are the Advantages to be Derived Therefrom?

(Published in full in the Calumet Weekly Index.)

To those who are familiar with what is technically called Spiritualism, this is not a new theme. It is sixty-two years ago to-morrow since the event occurred from which modern Spiritualism is dated (incorrectly, we think), and that is since the "rappings" or "knockings" at Hydesville, N. Y., in the home of the Fox family, in the presence of two little girls, two of the Fox sisters. We do not think Spiritualism began here, but that was a palpable or tangible manifestation of a power that is as old as humanity, and that has existed ever since humanity has existed, and that has manifested itself at various times and intervals in human history under the name of "prophecy," under the name of "revelation," and under the name of "ministering spirits or angels," or whatever we may call that which opens up the realm of immortal.

Spiritualism is not a new thing, but simply a new name which has been adapted to modern conditions, and which at the age of the world when those endowed with "spiritual gifts" are not persecuted very much, although there are some persecutions; yet, they are not put to death, and they are not called "witches" and various other opprobrious names, but we understand that even to-day there is that which is called unpopular in Spiritualism, merely because it is a new name for the old thought of immortality, for the old idea of longing for the knowledge of what is beyond the change called death, and for the mysteries that have come between the two worlds, that to-day, because of the lack of persecution are more general and widespread.

The fact that Spiritualism has been in the world sixty-two years technically, and is not as universally and generally adopted as steam, electricity, and some other of the scientific appliances of the world, is because it runs counter to already existing religious prejudices;

because people do not understand that it is a part of their religion; because they do not realize that it is another great awakening of spiritual impulse from the realm unseen, and from the Most High. When Jesus walked the earth ministering and teaching and bestowing spiritual gifts, and when aware of being put to death He said, "If I go away I will send you the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, who will reveal all things." "Many things I cannot tell you now because you cannot receive them." He promised them this Comforter. He did appear to his disciples afterwards in form, during the time they were in the "little upper room" without opening their closed doors; also to Paul on the road to Damascus, and, notably, first to the three Marys at the sepulcher; but that was not the great fulfilment. The Great Fulfilment was to be when the people were ready to receive the Spirit of Truth; so, it seems to me, that whenever and wherever this Spirit of Truth can find the opportunity of expression and of manifestation, there is this Comforter.

Certain it is, in all of the two thousand years since Christianity came, many of those spiritual gifts that Paul enumerates in his wonderful chapter on "spiritual gifts" have disappeared. Gradually, they were lost sight of in the Roman Catholic church. People were put to death for possessing them, who afterwards were canonized as Saints, and one of the latest of the canonizations was Joan of Arc, who, under spiritual endowment, bore forward the armies of France to victory, and then was put to death, and then, tardily, they claimed her. The church at large recognizes the gifts, but still is anxious that they should not be claimed outside of the church as spiritual gifts.

If you were to follow the history of the church in reference to these gifts you will find there has not been during the reign of the Roman Catholic church, and in the inception of the reformation, and after the reformation, during the dissenting agitation of Wesley and Whitefield, in fact, that there never has been a time when the gateways were not opened for such communications between the human and spiritual status. And from the time in the Ancient Book, when the angels walked and talked with Lot and Job, and (if you read carefully between the lines you will find that the guidance was by an unseen power), up to the time the angel declared the advent of the new message of Jesus, and up to the

time when these spiritual gifts were encouraged among the disciples and apostles, and down through the history of the Roman church, to the time when Luther, the pale Augustinian monk, sought to find the great secret of true religion, and found it not in the Roman church but when there appeared to him the spiritual vision; and when the Wesley family in their small family circle received manifestations, corresponding one with the other, John and Charles Wesley and other members of the family about the strange manifestations coming in their midst. Read the history of the Wesley family, and you will find in the earlier editions the entire account of these manifestation that occurred. Or take George Fox, of the Quakers, or "Mother Ann Lee" of the Shakers, who, without fiery creed, led the people to a grand inward reception of the spiritual cause. Through all time there have been the open messages, and you will find also that much of this has been lost in the external history of the church and world. Various denominations who have formulated creeds, thinking they were more in accordance with the teachings of Jesus, have forgotten the essential spirit, and have forgotten the power everywhere of great spiritual gifts.

Responding to the great need of what existed in the nineteenth century, this new impetus came. When you consider the state of public life, fifty or sixty years ago, you will realize, when Darwin was disintegrating the established theology of the day with the theory of evolution, there was coming into the great Christian church a great unrest about religious thought; the Church of England was divided into two great sections—the Broad church and the Established church. The Broad church was headed by Dean Stanley and Bishop Colenso, and they led the people of the church into broader views. There came to the then Queen of England (Victoria) by written messages through the hand of her youngest daughter, and through her faithful attendant, John Brown, the belief of spirit communion, and the receiving of messages from Prince Albert in the spirit world. Dean Stanley was asked if he did not think the people were insane in their belief, and he said, "Why?" He was told they believed in spirit communications and in messages from departed friends. He said, "If to believe in ministering spirits and communing with them is evidence of insanity, then all the Church of England ought to be

declared insane, for we distinctly every Sunday say, 'I believe in the communion of saints,' etc., etc. So that question was settled. And when, later, many of the prominent men of Great Britain and America accepted this thought people said they, too, were insane. A great many of our most brilliantly learned men accepted it upon investigation, and became convinced with the phenomena, the philosophy and the inspiration, and believed that they were the result of intelligence who had once lived in human life.

When Professor Crookes, one of the most eminent scientists, and Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, the greatest naturalist in the world, proclaimed this doctrine, and accepted the phenomena, then the scientific world could not laugh them to scorn, and to-day there are more than half a hundred of the most prominent scientific men in this country and in the old world who say "there is nothing in the whole range of material science that will explain the phenomena of Spiritualism;" when the Psychic Research Society was organized to take up this investigation people said, "Now the question will be settled of this unknown law of nature." It is something they did not understand, and these scientific men took up the investigation intelligently, and for the purpose of finding out some other source than that which had claimed to be the source of the message from the spirit world. One by one they were obliged to accept the evidence that came to them. Professor Wallace, Professor Crookes, Professor Flammarion, Professor Zollner and all these men in scientific circles. Then the American Psychic Research Society took it up, and we have Professor James, Dr. Hodgeson, Rev. Heber Newton, and, in fact, all these eminent men, who say, "We cannot explain this under any ordinary ideas of science." But men always fly to something else than the real cause, and so it has gone on in this way. The clergy have taken up the thought, and eminent people in all denominations have said, "We need this subject to be investigated. We need it. If this question be true, it will assist us in the promulgation of our religion."

Thirty-five years ago, when the one standing before you was in England, there was a convocation of the bishops of the Episcopal Church of England, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and this subject was brought up before them in this conference, and it was said by one among them, "We need Spiritualism more than Spiritualism

needs the church, because, if it is true, then it establishes beyond all doubt the records that we have maintained of that which occurred in ancient time in the presence of seer and prophet and the Messiah," and since that time Archdeacon Colley, who was then a curate, has announced his acceptance of the modern method, Spiritualism, as did Dean Stanley before his departure.

Over in this country, numerous men in the church and out of it, have accepted the thought of inter-communion, and later on, a man no less than Bishop Fallows of Chicago, under the name of "Immortalism," has accepted the communications of the spirit, has practiced spiritual healing, and has said that it is useless to deny the claims of modern Spiritualism in the establishment of inter-communion between the two worlds.

Rev. Heber Newton of New York said more than fifteen years ago, in an Easter sermon in New York City; "The Spiritualists are the only intelligent readers of the Bible concerning the true meaning of the Resurrection; of that life that is beyond Death, of that which overcomes the fear of the grave."

Now, Spiritualism is simply the intelligent knowledge of the message between the two worlds; of the fact of communion between those on earth and those who have passed beyond the change called death. The "mediums" are simply message bearers, the instruments, some of them more perfect than others, some of them less perfect. They are all human beings, subject to human feelings. But one messenger that brings to any human being the knowledge of the existence of friends that have been supposed to be dead, is worth more than all theories, and that knowledge is beyond all question of belief. I know that is the testimony of those who have the evidence, and this knowledge having been in the world sixty-two years.

We say to the people who ask us, and who say they would like to believe, "It is your own fault if you do not believe or know." Suppose some one next to you says, "I would like to send a message by telephone or telegraph." You say, "Have you a telephone in your own house?" "No." "Then all you have to do is to go where there are telephones or telegraph instruments and send your message." Therefore, if you want messages from the realm unseen, sit in the quietude of your own home, and if no instruments or mediums are there to

establish the inter-communion, then seek interviews with those who can bear your messages, and the knowledge will come to you as it has come to thousands of other people. Of course, the evidence may come and you may not be ready to receive it, but that is because of your own condition, but when it does come, when this knowledge takes the place of former mourning, when the joy of the knowledge of the existence of your friends, of those you love, instead of sadness, it is indeed a real Resurrection morn.

You can imagine what it was in the time of Jesus, when He who was believed to be all powerful and all potent, was crucified, put to death, laid away in the sepulchre, just like an ordinary mortal, and when his disciples turned and left him, afraid to stand up for him, all disappeared in the midst of the great persecution, and on the third morning the three Marys were the only ones courageous enough to go to the tomb to perform the sacred rites usually performed. They made that sad visit to the sepulchre, and He was not there. The "Angels had rolled away the stone," and said, "He is risen." And then when the voice of the Beloved Teacher was heard, their wonder increased when that voice was heard by them, and they recognized it. Can you imagine what joy, what gladness, was theirs; and even then, the fearful ones, the doubting ones always remained in the background and were afraid of the Roman law and the Jewish persecution. But to-day there is no such law to terrorize you, no persecutions, except those of petty neighbors or persons who may be prejudiced. This "stone has been rolled away from the sepulchre." This light has come, and the Angel says, "They are not there; they are risen," and can you who have this knowledge recall any joy as great as was this joy which you experienced when there came to you in the privacy of your own home, through, perhaps, the instrumentality of one of your own little children, like the Fox sisters, or like the one standing before you who commenced to speak when she was eleven years of age; can you imagine any greater joy than that which came to you when the messenger came and said, "I am not dead but living? I still live and love you?" Then all the years of sadness faded away, and the terror of death disappeared, and you understood that it was a part of the great economy of Infinite Love that these messengers should appear and you receive a message. Then you recalled these texts that perhaps you

have often read, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them who are the heirs of salvation." "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you," and "If I go away I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Then you may recall everything you ever had sung about the ministry of angels, and about their presence in your home, and, oh, what delight there was. It was like the going forth from the darkness to light.

Now, while you have faith, that is very much. Faith is much better than Belief. It is well to believe, but Knowledge is far greater. It is infinitely greater to have knowledge, and we think the highest interpretation of Paul's definition of Faith is Knowledge. Faith is the evidence, the substance, the actuality of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. When you do not see these things, usually your spiritual vision is blind. Usually the human senses are not attuned to hear the quickening power and to see the illumination. It comes often to those who are uplifted and exalted in their spiritual inspiration; but here is knowledge that has to come to you in the shadow chamber, in the silence of your home, or wherever may be seen the messengers of this great realm of spirit. It is a very interesting realm. Think of it. It is not like the former thought of it away beyond the clouds, beyond the stars, but only just beyond this little barrier of the senses, only just beyond this little cloud of earthliness, and this realm is there, just as much as the oxygen is there that you do not see; just as much as the electricity is there which you do not see until it is called into demonstration.

This spiritual realm is a great inner room. Sir Oliver Lodge, one of the greatest scientific men of the day, said, "I am convinced that the further we get away from this so-called 'matter,' the nearer we are to the sublime realities of the universe. "He means the farther you are from this coarse substance, this external form. Are your thoughts not greater than your body? Are they not greater than the brain physiologically? Are they not greater than the material forces of the world? And yet, by and by, when the subtle powers of science are brought into requisition, it will be possible for the scientists to come into this room and photograph what you are thinking about, and then you will be careful what you think

when you know that people will see your thoughts and know what you think; and the time will come when people, instead of being blind and deaf to these messages, will listen to them, and your senses of perception will be spiritually opened, and it will be just as easy for you to talk with mother or father or sister or husband or wife who are in the realm of spirit, as to talk to the friends at your side.

Why, just see what your children know who are in the high schools. Branches are now taught that were only known to the philosophers and recluses of ancient time; mathematical propositions are understood now by the little children, that were only known to the most learned men of past times. To-day you are growing familiar with all the subtle force of the elements around you.

The joy of knowing about the other world is that you know what you are preparing for. It is a matter of growth. You have been told to "lay up your treasures in heaven," but you did not exactly know what they were; you did not know they are good deeds, loving thoughts, and the great spirit of God's love that shall be alive in your hearts; and all that time you have been told that you had to make preparation for the other world, but you did not know what to do. You send your little children to school; you expect them to go through the primary department, through the different grades and through high school, and possibly through college, and you think that they will be fitted then for the duties of this life. Now, if you are building only for time, if you are being educated only for this world, only one kind of education is necessary, but if the spirit is to live beyond the change called death, and is to be an intelligent, acting, living entity, then the kind of preparation you make must be for spiritual riches and spiritual treasures. Not only all the Intelligence you can possess; not only all the knowledge that is necessary here and now, but that which will enable you to lay aside the material body and take up successfully the spiritual existence that will follow.

If you were going to Europe, or going to Egypt, or going anywhere; even if going to Africa on a hunting expedition, you would endeavor to find out everything you could about the country before you start. You would go through a certain kind of education; you would go

through a certain kind of discipline, and you would go through a certain kind of preparation, and if it is positively certain that the change called death ushers every human being into the next step of life, then it is important for you to know what will be required there. These babes may go, some of them go out of your own household. Do they continue as babes, or do they grow and take up other lines of work? And while you are wondering about it you have a message brought by these ministering spirits. "We have guardians and teachers who are teaching us to grow along spiritual lines; we have wonderful teachers," and so these little ones become your ministering teachers.

Take up great branches of spiritual learning, and become possessed of a wider range of knowledge and even in this life your heaven is here.

These young men and young women that can't be spared from your daily life, take up the great pursuits of life there, and see the worlds that are moving in space, and they come to understand the laws of the higher chemistry much better than you do, and penetrating beyond matter, they are able to see the great forces that stand ready to do your bidding. And these gray-haired seers, those who have graduated in the human schools, they also may take up this higher and more perfect praise in the realm beyond.

Your astronomers, instead of gazing through the shadows of the earthly atmosphere, can fix the lens, not of an instrument, but of the mind upon a distant world, or system of worlds, and can inspire human astronomers with greater and more wonderful discoveries, and lead them step by step to higher altitudes of knowledge.

There is no discovery of human science that has not been known to minds in the spiritual kingdom for ages, and those beings are waiting for you to grow, waiting for human beings to become more intelligent, waiting until there is some one on earth ready, as Edison was, or, in fact, all of the great inventors, to give forth this knowledge to the world. Edison said once to the one standing before you, "I do not invent these things; they are mostly given to me in my sleep." And that knowledge comes in the realm where all these things are given. So does the thought wait for every human being; there is a divine workshop, a divine place where all these things are known. Sometimes you pass that way in

your sleep; sometimes you dream dreams that are of that realm; sometimes in your waking hours a sudden thought comes into your mind, uplifting, strengthening and inspiring you. The ministering spirit passes by, the minister of light draws near, and you do not know it, but you feel strengthened and comforted and uplifted, and have greater knowledge.

"What advantage or benefit is it?" the questioner asks. What advantage is it not? You know your life purpose then. Instead of death you know there is some foundation for the faith that is in the world. You know that these ministering ones are as much a part of existence as are you, and you grow to have knowledge of the ones interested in you. When the Rev. Dr. Thomas of Chicago was talking upon this subject he said, "Why, there isn't another life; there is simply life, this is life, and this higher life is merely a continuance of life."

Of the knowledge that it brings, and above all, the comfort that it brings. We have known of many a mother's heart that has been well-nigh unto breaking; many a mother's mind that has been well-nigh unbalanced because her darling, her child had passed from her sight, and she did not know; she thought she believed, she thought she had comfort, she thought there was the knowledge of Jesus the Christ, and of the future life, but when it came to standing by the tomb, she did not know; and when this knowledge came, and the beautiful light and love of her darling came to her, it was indeed to her a resurrection morn.

So the advantage and benefit is that it is true. The advantage is that it is comfort. The advantage is that it doesn't wipe out any other truth in the universe; that it is a part of all the truth in the universe. It doesn't ask for priceless gifts. It doesn't seek to enforce belief, it does not come proselyting, it simply says this knowledge is yours, you can have it, if you wish, you can be blessed by it if you desire, and you can find the key to this other realm. The door has been unlocked for you, the messengers are around and about you, and it only needs that you shall make the effort and it will be your life.

But why should we always talk about the advantage of this, and the advantage of that. People seem to look upon the future life, and upon religion, and upon truth as if they were some kind of investment in stocks and

bonds and awards, and say, "Well, if I believe this, what advantage will I gain?"

The Kingdom of Heaven, the realm of the spirit is not a stock exchange; you are not investing in something that will repay you back in some pecuniary way. The "advantage" of knowing the sun shines is that it shines; and the advantage of having fresh air is that you breathe, and breathe freer, and the advantage of knowing that the next life is the continuation of this is that you are not all the time afraid of death. And the advantage of knowing that truth is truth is that naught of error can frighten or alarm. No one can come to you with bugaboos to frighten you.

Some of us were asked at one of the large summer meetings if there was such a thing as a devil in Spiritualism. "Oh, yes," we said, "every time a bad man or woman looks into a mirror that one sees the picture of his Satanic majesty, and that devil is here more than any in the other world."

You know it is said that during the time that Jesus' body laid in the sepulchre, "He went and visited the spirits in prison," and does not that prove that spirits can do that also. And when this great awakening comes, it will give you knowledge of that which is called obsession, which is always being feared; therefore I say you need not fear. There is a law of spirit that "like attracts like," and those whom you invite to you will come to you; if you are good no evil spirit can approach you except to be aided.

The world is better, humanity is better, the spirit life is nearer God, and the angel world are everywhere, and the whole question of human life, and human death, and human immortality is being solved by the voices that come from the upper air.

Dear friends, our time is limited to-day, and our subject is inexhaustible. We hope we have given you a little glimpse of this subject, and to close, I will ask the reporter to mention a subject on which I may improvise a little poem.

The reporter: "Immortality."

There is no evidence within the sod  
That the seed will last forevermore;  
Although it blossoms unto God  
Year after year its life doth pour

And its fragrance traveleth afar  
Out on the balmy summer air,  
And the blossom gleameth as a star  
All beautiful and bright and fair.  
But the time comes when the seed must die;  
Is such our human destiny?

There is no evidence that the tree,  
Gigantic and of centuries growth,  
Will abide as a tree eternally;  
We turn away from our senses, loath  
To believe that some time the earth  
Will claim that scion of noble birth.

But within the human soul must arise  
Questionings of deepest desire;  
Thought of the life beyond the skies,  
"The kindling of a hidden fire."  
A flame that, Prometheon like, will burn  
Until it shall unto its source return.

It was Plato's teachings that foretold.  
"Oh, yes, it must be so," he said;  
"Else why this fond desire we hold.  
This seeking for life divine instead  
Of dwelling in the house of clay  
But for an instant to pass away."

Indeed, every prophet, seer and sage,  
Every saint and poet with wondrous pen  
Has written upon history's page  
Of the Immortality of men.

And the light that comes from the realm unseen;  
Presses aside the dark shadows here  
Until wherever humanity has been  
There is knowledge of that higher sphere.

Emerson says, "Look thou within, for the Soul  
To whom God gives that fond desire;  
Must that Immortality win, its goal  
Is conquered through this living fire."  
And Death and Fear shall pass away  
'Neath the light of that Immortal Day.